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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 10, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Congress returns to Washington this week after a month connecting with people at home, hopefully with a little time with family and friends.

Some think our overwhelming agenda was made nearly impossible with the Syrian question, which no one expected when we recessed—somewhat ironic—even though 100,000 Syrians have been killed and 2 million refugees

are flooding into neighboring countries.

We face a looming budget showdown and a debt ceiling crisis. While we have futile votes to defund ObamaCare, the rest of the country is in the midst of a dramatic change in health care, perhaps the most profound in half a century. The health care reform train has left the station.

What if we took a break from sabotaging ObamaCare and creating a debt ceiling crisis to do our job as representatives of the people and as leaders?

What are we for?

We might start with Syria. I have deep reservations about the use of force, but as one of the people who called upon the President to involve Congress in this decision, I think we have an obligation to at least hear him out. Let's work to refine the Russian proposal, which appears to have had some American origins.

What about the 2 million refugees who need our help, to say nothing of their host countries?

Let's seize upon some of the promising signs out of Iran, from their new leadership, to make progress, both in Syria and with the Iranian nuclear question.

Domestically, let's spend our time rebuilding and renewing America, not just lamenting the poor shape of our infrastructure. Let's work together to support the vision and the resources to rebuild and renew the country and put Americans back to work.

Internationally—I see my good friend and colleague, Congressman TED POE, on the floor. Why don't we zero in on the efforts with our international Water for the World legislation to help deal with sanitation and safe drinking water for poor people around the globe?

Think about those 200 million hours women will spend in sub-Saharan Africa gathering water today, time that they won't spend in school or working for their families.

Let's use the fall to identify and move forward on the vast array of things where we actually agree we can work together and they won't cost very much. America will be the better for it, and so will Congress.

THE WAR ON SYRIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, Russia's diplomatic intervention in the Syrian crisis is indeed welcome news. But whether it is real or illusory, the President needs to step back from the dangerous precipice that he has brought us to.

Certainly, he's made his case for war with Syria very clearly, that the United States must punish the use of chemical weapons, and if we don't, they're more likely to be used again. He assures us that the strike will be limited and that it will aid moderates fighting the regime. He warns that American credibility is at stake. The case is quite clear: it is simply not convincing.

It's possible that an attack on Syria will convince Assad not to use chemical weapons in the future. But it is just as likely to convince him that, being in for a penny, he might as well be in for a pound and unleash his entire chemical arsenal.

It is just as likely that an American strike on Syria will produce a retaliatory strike, possibly by Hezbollah against Israel, requiring a retaliatory strike by Israel, possibly on Iran, in a catastrophic chain reaction.

We don't know where it will lead, but we can be sure that the morning after the attack we would confront a most uncomfortable irony. In retaliation for Assad killing Syrian civilians with chemical weapons, the United States will have killed Syrian civilians with

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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conventional weapons, for civilian casualties are an unavoidable tragedy of war.

Well, who would be our new allies in this war?

They'd be the Islamic forces that are responsible for their own litany of atrocities, including the massacre of Syrian Christians, the beheading of political opponents, summary executions of war prisoners and acts of barbarity too depraved to be discussed in this forum. We would be aiding and abetting those forces.

We're told that al Qaeda's not more than a fourth of our new coalition and that the rest are moderates. Well, we were told the same thing about Libya. We were told the same thing about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The problem with moderates in the Middle East is that there aren't very many of them, and they're quickly overwhelmed in any coalition they attempt.

Nor can such an attack be limited in duration or scope. The fact is, once you have attacked another country, you are at war with that country and its allies, whatever you wish to call it, and whatever you later decide to do.

And wars have a very nasty way of taking turns that no one can predict or control. World War I began with a series of obscure incidents that quickly escalated into world war. And the Middle East today is a veritable powder keg compared to the antebellum Europe of a century ago.

Finally, we're told American credibility is on the line. Well, chemical weapons are barbaric, but this isn't the first time they've been used in modern times. They were used previously in Syria, in the Yemeni civil war, by Iraq against Iran, by the Vietnamese against the Cambodians, by Libya against Chad.

The only unique thing about this incident is that it is the first time an American President has declared their use to be a "red line." Our credibility was harmed by a foolish and reckless statement by the President. Let us not further damage it with a foolish and reckless act by Congress.

Wars are not something to be taken lightly. From the podium right behind me, General MacArthur warned that, "In war there is no substitute for victory."

If you're going to start a war, you'd better be prepared to put the entire resources of the country behind it, to endure every setback along the way, to utterly annihilate every vestige of the enemy, and to install, by force, a government of our design and choosing, and to maintain that government until all opposition is ceased. If you are not willing to do that, then you have no business firing the first shot.

More than a decade of irresolute and aimless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan should have taught us this lesson: that victory, and not stalemate, must be the objective of any war. Yet, this would be a war whose avowed objective

is stalemate. That is self-defeating. It is immoral.

The President has already made his case very clearly, and he is very clearly wrong.

THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank President Obama for his considered judgment in the matter of Syria, and for not headstrong rushing the United States to military action.

I thank him for his consultations with Members of Congress in both Chambers, and for allowing the American people time to express their views. We must all weigh the consequences and repercussions of unilateral U.S. action.

As the world's greatest military power, we must employ our power wisely, and only with good measure. I have every confidence that our U.S. military can perform any task to which they are ordered successfully, and we owe them our deepest respect and gratitude.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the government of Russia for early reports we are learning about regarding discussions under way to rid Syria of weapons caches of danger both to Syria as well as our global community.

Both Russia and the United States, as the world's premier nuclear powers, hold awesome responsibilities to move our world to a more peaceful and stable posture. Surely, we must focus that effort on the very unstable set of states across the Middle East.

Russia and our country both have suffered from terrorist attacks and well understand the consequences of unresolved conflict and terrorists preying on unstable states.

My hope is that the Russian initiative gains momentum. And let all nations of goodwill on our globe find a way forward to address the tragic consequences of the Syrian civil war, starting with greater humanitarian assistance to refugees that have flowed into adjoining nations like Jordan and Lebanon and Turkey, straining some of those nations' abilities to even hold their own internal affairs together.

Surely, our world can better address the human suffering that is evident to anyone who's paying attention. Surely, surely, all reasonable world leaders can find a better way forward for Syria and for us all.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE PRESIDENT BEATS THE DRUMS FOR WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the drums of war are being beaten by the President who, ironically, won the Nobel Peace Prize. The "Peace Presi-

dent" wants to fire missiles into Syria because tyrant Assad is violating the rules of war by allegedly using chemical weapons. The President's goal is not to remove Assad, not to destroy the chemical weapons, but to send Assad a message.

To be clear, there is no imminent national security threat or interest for the United States by us starting this war. And make no mistake, shooting rockets into another country is an act of war.

War has consequences. What if the outlaw Assad chooses then to use chemical weapons again or chooses to shoot back? He could retaliate against the United States, one of our embassies, the Navy that fired the rockets, or other U.S. military installations, or even specific troops, or retaliate against his neighbor, Turkey, or Israel, using our aggression as an excuse. In any of these situations, this limited war escalates with more U.S. response, intervention, and involvement.

Now, who are the players in this war that is taking place already? On one side you have Syria, tyrant Assad, with the aid of Russia, with the aid of Iran that news reports say has 10,000 Iranian troops in Syria, and Hezbollah. Hezbollah, as you remember, Madam Speaker, is a terrorist group.

Then, on the other side, you have the Free Syrian Army. You have patriots. You have mercenaries, paid soldiers from other countries. You have criminals that have come in to just pillage the land and use this as an opportunity. You also have al Nusra, an al Qaeda affiliate. You also have al Qaeda from Iraq. Now, last time I recall, the United States is already at war with al Qaeda. They are the enemy of the United States.

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And it looks like now you've got the terrorist group Hezbollah on one side and the terrorist group al Qaeda on the other side. And we want to get involved in this civil religious war to send a message not to use chemical weapons?

Of course, you not only just have these players, but you've got Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar lined up on the side of the Free Syrian Army. Turkey is a next-door neighbor to Syria. A year ago, a Turkish F-4 built by the United States was flying along the Syrian border, and it was shot down. We don't know who shot it down.

Meanwhile, the United States already has, along with its NATO parties, patriot batteries on the Syrian border facing Syria that are in Turkey. The Dutch, the Germans, and the Americans have manned those batteries. Why? To make sure that our NATO ally is protected from incoming rockets. If we escalate this regional conflict in one country, it may escalate to other regions, like Turkey. Then we've got real issues because Turkey is a NATO ally. We are obligated to help them if they get into a war with Syria.